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1872-02-02

Letter from John Muir to [Charles Warren] Stoddard, [1872] Feb 2.

John Muir

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printed with God in a thousand forms
 Ever your friend
 John Muir

C47

Yosemite Val^y Feb 20

Dear Stoddard, I have been
 claiming you for a friend for
 a long time although a few miles
 of air has separated us, Mrs Can-
 has mirrored you up here many
 times & our mutual friend Mrs
 Hutchings has said many a loving
 word for you. & last Spring Mr
 Emerson asked me many questions
 concerning you & spoke of verses
 you had sent him, in a way that
 made me hope that you had a con-
 sidering grandfather than any you
 have yet conceived. In this way
 I have learned to know you. &
 I am cordially glad to feel that
 you are coming nearer.

You hope that you will not
"disappoint me" the danger
of being disappointed is all on
your own side. I don't believe
one half that Mrs Carr says. I
am only a piece of jagged human
mist drifting about these rocks
& waters Heaven only knows how
or when for.

Hitherto I have walked
alone I shall rejoice in you as
companion but remember that
in that case "a vagabond shalt thou
be". Moreover you must not hope
that I can teach you, I am only
a baby slowly learning my mountain
Alphabet. But I can truly promise
that Nature will do great things for you.
I know little of men yet I venture
to say that half our best teachers
are manufactured, - no ground
& pressed in the mills of culture

that God cannot play a single
tune upon them.

I am glad to learn my friend
that you have not yet submitted
yourself to any of the mouldy laws
of literature - that your spiritual
affinities are still alive & unsatisfied
Come then to the mountains &
bathe in fountain Love. Stand upon
our domes & let spirit winds blow
through you & you will sing effortlessly
as an Eolian harp

You will enjoy the ocean.
There is but little difference between
land & sea, Heavens! what
glorious storm nights you will
have among phosphorescent foam
that God has given to you.
Save your existence in those
the Beauty & Love of those Isles of
the sea. Keep your heart pure
& it shall be like a silver plate

LETTER BY JOHN MUIR TO CHARLES WARREN STODDARD.
Facsimile published by THE BOOK CLUB OF
CALIFORNIA with comment by CHARLES KEELER.

[2d]
Yosemite Val' Feb 20, (1872).

Dear Stoddard, I have been claiming you for a friend for a long time although a few miles of air has separated us. Mrs. Carr has mirrored you up here many times and our mutual friend, Mrs. Hutchings has said many a loving word for you and last spring Mr. Emerson asked me many questions concerning you and spoke of verses you had sent him, in a way that made me hope that you had a song to sing grander than any you have yet conceived. In this way I have learned to know you, and I am cordially glad to feel that you are coming nearer.

You hope that you will not disappoint me. The danger of being disappointed is all on your own side. Don't believe one half ~~of what~~ that Mrs. Carr says. I am only a piece of jagged human mist drifting about these rocks and waters, Heaven only knows how or wherefor.

Hitherto I have walked alone. I shall rejoice in you as companion but remember that in that case "A vagabond shalt thou be." Moreover you must not hope that I can teach you, I am only a baby slowly learning my mountain alphabet. But I can freely promise that Nature will do great things for you. I know little of men. Yet I venture to say that half of our best teachers are manufactured, - so ground and pressed in the mills of culture that God cannot play a single tune upon them.

I am glad to learn my friend that you have not yet submitted yourself to any of the mouldy laws of literature - that your spiritual affinities are still alive and unsatisfied. Come then to the mountains and bathe in fountain Love. Stand upon our Domes and let spirit winds blow through you and you will sing effortless as any Eolian harp.

You will enjoy the ocean. There is but little difference between land and sea. Heavens! What glorious storm nights you will have among phosphorescent foam.

May God be good to you. Lave your existence in the Beauty and Love of those Isles of the sea. Keep your heart pure, and it shall be like a silvered plate printed with God in a thousand forms.

Ever your friend,

JOHN MUIR.

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